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ABSTRACT

In a survey of student opinions of advisement, variations of a questionnaire were sent to a random sample of students and given to a random sample of students in classes. Analysis of the data from 519 respondents showed advisor functions to be ranked in this order of importance: (1) assisting with course choice and scheduling; (2) assistance with choice of majors and minors; (3) advice on career decisions; and (4) assistance with institutional red tape. Assistance with study skills was not perceived as an advisor role, and advice on personal problems was seen as least important. These perceptions did not vary by student class level or satisfaction with advising services. The most valued advisor characteristic was knowledge of regulations, course requirements, and academic progress of the student. Many more students were dissatisfied with faculty advising than were dissatisfied with course work, nonacademic college life, or advisement offered at the central advising office. Almost all felt that advisement should be regularly evaluated, as well as classroom instruction. Two-thirds agreed that evaluations of faculty advising should be placed in faculty personnel files and should be considered in promotion decisions. Self-reported likelihood of leaving college was significantly correlated with lack of commitment to major, somewhat correlated with satisfaction with course work, but generally not correlated with either satisfaction with advisement or nonacademic aspects of college life. (MSE)

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STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT

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STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT

Peter H. Wood and Jane H. Wood

Abstract

Efforts to improve and evaluate college advising have gained increased national attention, partly in the hope of increasing student retention through improved advisement. The Program Advisement Office of the College of Education at Bowling Green State University completed a survey of student opinions on advisement. Variations of the same questionnaire were mailed to a randomly selected (44%) sample of the College's students and also were presented to a randomly selected sample of students attending the College's classes. Analyses of the data from 519 college students indicated that: 1) the advisor role of assisting students with course choice and with course scheduling was the most important advisor function for most students, and one of the two most important functions for over 85% of these college students; 2) advice concerning decisions as to academic majors and minors was the second most frequently nominated advisor function, and advice concerning career decisions ranked third in importance; 3) assistance with institutional red tape ranked as the fourth most important function; 4) assistance with study skills was not perceived to be a major function of advisors while assistance with personal problems was the advisor function most frequently cited to be the least important of the six advisor roles; 5) students of different class levels and students that differed in their satisfaction with advisement did not differ as to their perceptions concerning the order of importance of the different advisor roles; 6) the most valued advisor characteristic was knowledge, especially knowledge concerning regulations, knowledge concerning course and program requirements, and knowledge or awareness of student academic progress; 7) the availability, dependability and willingness to listen were also rated as important advisor characteristics; 8) three to four times as many students (19-24%) were dissatisfied with faculty advisement as were dissatisfied with their course work (7%), their nonacademic college life (6%), or with the professional advisement offered at the College's centralized advisement office (6%); 9) almost all (93%) of the respondents to the survey believed that advisement should be regularly evaluated, and 97% also favored regular evaluation of classroom instruction; 10) only 63% of the students agreed that student ratings of advisement should be placed in the personnel files of faculty and should be considered in reaching promotion decisions, and 69% favored similar use of student ratings of classroom teaching; 11) self-reported likelihood of leaving college was significantly correlated (r = .37) with lack of commitment to a major, somewhat correlated with satisfaction with course work (r = .23), but generally not correlated with either satisfaction with advisement or satisfaction with the nonacademic aspects of college life.

Student Attitudes Toward Academic Advisement

The evaluation and improvement of the advisement of college students has gained increased attention during the past several years. The National Academic Advising Association was created during national conferences held in 1977, 1978, and 1979; a standardized advisement effectiveness questionnaire was piloted in nine colleges in 1978 and is now available to all potential users (Brock, 1978a, 1978b; Kramer & Gardner, 1978); and an external grant permitted the American College Testing Service to offer a nation-wide series of advisement seminars during 1978 and 1979. Recent studies by Gaff, Festa, and Gaff (1978), by Moomaw (1977), and by Morstain and Gaff (1977) have provided evidence that both college students and college administrators perceive advisement to be an important college function that, too often, is poorly conducted, poorly rewarded, and poorly evaluated. Levine and Weingart (1973) examined advising at twenty-six colleges and were even more negative in their conclusion that advising in general, and faculty advising in particular, was "uniformly unsuccessful" and "unable to serve the minimal function of providing students with sufficient knowledge to use the resources of the college most advantageously" (p. 18).

At least some of the recent interest in advisement can be attributed to a belief (or a hope) that improved advisement might produce an improved retention of the scarcer college student of the 1980's. Timmons (1977) discovered that withdrawing college students were more likely to rate both their advisement and their own study habits as inadequate. Beal and Noel (1979) reported that administrators at 858 colleges and universities rated "inadequate academic advising" as the

most important negative influence upon student retention. A "caring attitude of faculty and staff" was rated as the most important positive influence upon retention. High quality teaching, adequate financial aid, student involvement, quality advisement, excellent counseling, and excellent career-planning services were ranked, in order of decreasing importance, behind this "caring attitude." Terenzini and Pascarella (1977, 1979) demonstrated that student integration into both the social and the academic systems of a college correlated with retention. Informal interaction with faculty was found to contribute to both types of integration and was consistently related to the student's decision to persist in college or to withdraw.

Efforts to improve advising have taken a variety of directions. Michigan State University (Krupka & Vener, 1978) has taken steps to better match freshman and advisor career interests, and the Commission on the Status of Women (Lacher, 1978) has alerted advisors to the career-decision problems unique to women students. The University of Denver (Aitken & Conrad, 1977) and the John Jay College of Criminal Justice (Bonifacio & Noland, 1978) are two of the colleges that have turned to the computer to provide advisors and advisees with data regarding course choice and program requirements while many other colleges have established special advisement centers that are staffed with trained, professional advisors (Higbee, 1979). College students have been trained and employed as academic advisors (Jennings, 1978), as study-skills counselors (Brown, 1972), and as the initial link in a referral process for other students who face a wide range of personal problems. Innovations and modifications of advisement services have become so frequent at some of the larger universities that the State

University of New York felt the need to publish a SUNY Retention newsletter that provides brief descriptions of advisement techniques that have been implemented by the various colleges of the SUNY system.

Quite obviously, advisement has become a generic term that is being employed to describe a diverse set of faculty-student, staff-student, and student-to-student interactions. Levine (1978) has defined advising as "counseling available to students or potential students that is directly or indirectly concerned with the undergraduate curriculum" (p. 134) and has decribed four types of advising:

1. academic advising that is concerned with course selection and scheduling, and with student academic performance and progress;
2. personal advising that deals with affective development and the student's private or non-academic life;
3. career advising that is concerned with occupational planning, preparation and placement; and
4. special group advising which provides counseling or support services to special groups of students.

Advisement regarding financial aid and study skills form two other advisement categories that may overlap the other four. A series of nation-wide surveys and studies by the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education (Levine, 1978) have indicated that, while the majority of undergraduates (69%) seek academic advising, only one-third (32%) seek career advising, and less than one-quarter (22%) report having sought personal advising. From 27% to 33% of the undergraduates seeking these three types of advisement rated the advisement they received as "inadequate." However, student ratings of the adequacy

of advisement differed across types of colleges with students at research-oriented universities appearing to be less satisfied with all three types of advisement.

The Brock (1978) study of advisement practices, and the survey that was employed in Brock's study focused upon three advisement functions:

1. course choice;
2. career selection; and
3. assistance with personal problem solving.

Brock reported that satisfaction with the course choice function was most correlated with global advisement ratings while satisfaction with the personal problem solving aspect of advisement was least correlated with the global rating of particular advisors. The implications were that students were more likely to perceive advisement as more appropriately focused upon course selection than upon the resolution of personal problems. A more direct way to determine student perceptions as to the importance of possible advisor roles would be to ask students which advisor roles were most important to them. It is possible that some roles, such as career guidance, are more valued by those closer to graduation, while other roles, such as course selection or assistance with study skills may be more valued by students just beginning their college work.

The Evaluation of Advisement

The various nation-wide surveys have permitted the identification of general trends, and strengths and weaknesses of advisement in general. For example, although faculty were formally involved with student advisement at over 90% of four-year colleges (Levine, 1978,

p. 144), over one-third (36%) of 25,000 surveyed undergraduates reported that they did not know of any faculty member who took a special interest in their academic progress. Nearly half (47%) of these undergraduates also reported that there were no faculty they felt free to turn to for personal advice. Studies of advisement at individual institutions (e.g., O'Neil, Price & Eads, 1977a, 1977b; Simono, 1978) have indicated that, although faculty may value their advisement function, the faculty reflected in these studies were generally unknowledgeable concerning their university's support services; perceived themselves to be unknowledgeable; and were generally uninterested in participating in in-service training to become more informed. Faculty also appeared to be unaware of the importance that students tended to place upon the information-providing aspects of academic advisement.

Several of the various inter-institutional and intra-institutional studies of advisement have indicated that institutions, and the advisors within them, differ in effectiveness. The Brock study (1978a, 1978b) and the current survey were intended, in part, to investigate procedures by which the effectiveness, strengths and weaknesses of individual advisors (or the advisement associated with individual academic programs) can be measured. When each advisor (or program) has contact with a very limited number of advisees who may never meet together as a group, there arise obvious problems related to access to raters, response bias, reliability, and anonymity. If questionnaires or evaluation forms were mailed to the advisees in particular programs, and the initial response rates fell into the typical 15-25% range, response bias would be a major threat. The need to protect anonymity might preclude the focused follow-up needed to attain acceptably high

response rates. Distribution of questionnaires in a program's core courses would insure higher response rates (and avoid mailing costs) but would present obvious sampling problems.

The current survey was designed to elicit student opinions concerning advisement and also to permit a comparison of the results elicited by mailed and by classroom-distributed questionnaires. A second purpose of the current survey involved an attempt to increase the response to the mailed questionnaire by making it shorter, more attractively printed, and more colorful. Consequently, several versions of the questionnaire were constructed, and their associated response rates were compared.

METHOD

Subjects

The subjects were undergraduate college students who were enrolled in the College of Education of a midwestern state university of moderate size (approximately 15,000 students). Sample I consisted of the 339 students that responded to one of four questionnaires that were mailed to the campus address of a randomly selected 1,600 (44%) of the students in the College. Sample II consisted of the 178 students that attended the seven randomly selected education classes. Twenty-three percent of the students in Sample I were freshmen, 23% were sophomores, 24% were juniors and 30% were seniors. Seniors comprised 63% of Sample II, juniors were 33% and freshmen and sophomores were 1% and 3%, respectively.

Questionnaires

Four different multiple-choice questionnaires were constructed. All were designed to be completed in a twenty-minute period of time.

Form 1 consisted of 56 items typed on both sides of an 8½" x 14" sheet of white paper. Forms 2, 3, and 4 presented the first seventeen of these questions on one side of an 8½" x 11" page. Form 2 was professionally type-set and printed on orange paper; form 3 was similarly type-set and printed, but on white paper; while form 4 was composed on a typewriter and xeroxed on white paper. One-quarter (400) of those receiving the mailed questionnaires received each of the four forms. All subjects in the classroom sample (Sample II) received form 4.

Procedures

The on-campus mailing addresses of all students in the College of Education were ordered to be delivered in mid-March. The resulting mailing labels were randomly assigned to each of the four forms until the 1,600 forms had been mailed. Four week later, seven education classes were randomly selected from the roster of classes and their students were asked to complete form 4 of the questionnaire. Students who had completed the mailed questionnaire were asked not to complete the classroom version.

RESULTS

Differences in the Responses of Different Groups

Three hundred and thirty-nine (21.1%) of the 1,600 mailed questionnaires were returned, and 178 other students completed questionnaires in randomly selected education classes. Those returning the mailed questionnaires (26% freshmen, 29% sophomores, 20% juniors and 24% seniors) were approximately representative of the number of students of each of the four undergraduate class levels (22.8% freshmen, 23.1% sophomores, 23.9% juniors, 30.2% seniors) that academic term, but

those completing questionnaires in education classes were almost all (96%) juniors (33%) or seniors (63%). Few freshmen (1%) or sophomores (3%) were represented in this group because most education classes were not open to lower division undergraduates.

A series of one-way analyses of variance and Chi-square analyses indicated that the responses of the mailed-response and the in-class-response groups differed for only two questions. The same two questions also elicited different responses from students that differed as to class level.

(1) Seniors were somewhat less likely to strongly agree (27.4%) that "all students should be required to meet with their advisor at least once each academic quarter" than were freshmen (47%), sophomores (41.3%) or juniors (41.9%) (Chi^2 = 30.6, df = 16, $p < .02$).

(2) Freshmen were less likely to strongly agree that they were "committed to their current major" (39%) than were sophomores (67%), juniors (72%) or seniors (79%) (Chi^2 = 79, df = 16, $p < .0001$).

No other responses differed significantly (at the .05 level) across class levels or across the two different groups of subjects. Consequently, responses from the two groups of subjects were combined in the subsequent analyses.

Perceived Importance of Advisor Functions

The traditional advisor role of assisting students with course choice and scheduling was perceived to be the most important advisor function by 53% of the students responding to the questionnaires and either the first or second most important function by nearly 85% of

the respondents. Assistance with major/minor decisions was the most important function for 27% of the students and either first or second most important for over 57%. Assistance with career decisions appeared to be of somewhat lesser importance, while the advisor as a guide to personal problem solving was perceived to be the least important advisor function. Assistance with the development of study skills or with cutting institutionalred tape also were perceived as secondary, rather than primary advisor roles.

Table 1 presents the responses to those questions, common to all four forms of the survey, that asked students to identify their advisor's most and least important functions.

Table 1

Advisor's Most and Least Important Functions

Advisor Functions	Most Important N	%	Second Most Important N	%	Least Important N	%
	---------Response Rates---------					
1. Major/Minor Decisions	138	(26.6%)	154	(30.1%)	15	(2.9%)
2. Career Decisions	88	(17.0%)	127	(24.8%)	21	(4.1%)
3. Courses/Schedules	272	(52.5%)	156	(30.5%)	10	(2.0%)
4. Study Skills	2	(0.4%)	14	(2.7%)	123	(24.0%)
5. Red Tape	14	(2.7%)	47	(9.2%)	72	(14.1%)
6. Personal Problems	0	(0.0%)	13	(2.5%)	270	(52.7%)

Somewhat surprisingly, the use of Chi-square analyses indicated that student opinions as to the most, the second most, and the least most important functions did not vary across the four college class levels. Although it might be expected that study skill development might be more important for freshmen or sophomores while career decision-making would be more important for juniors or seniors, there were no significant differences across grade levels as to the perceived importance of the different advisor functions.

General Satisfaction

Table 2 presents the student responses to ten questions that were common to all questionnaires. The great majority of those who responded to these questions appeared to agree that: they were committed to their major (88% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement); their coursework was valuable and worthwhile (71% agreed or strongly agreed); their nonacademic life at college was exciting and enjoyable (72% agreed or strongly agreed); their advisor (64%) and their college advisement office (65%) were effective and helpful; and that they planned to continue with their present advisor (67%) who they would recommend to a friend (60%). Only six students (1.2%) agreed that they planned to drop out of college (12 others, or 2.3%, were undecided).

Looking at this data from the negative side: 21% would not recommend their present advisor; nearly 20% did not wish to continue with their present advisor; 19% did not believe their advisor to be helpful and effective; 8% did not believe their central advisement office to be effective and helpful; 5% (24 students) found their courses to be neither valuable nor worthwhile (and 123 others or nearly 24% were undecided); 7% found their nonacademic life at college to be less than exciting and enjoyable (but 22% were undecided); while five (1.5%) students strongly agreed that they would probably drop out of school, one other agreed and twelve more were undecided.

Other Responses. When students were asked to circle what would probably be their highest academic degree, one circled the H.S. Diploma, 213 (42.7%) circled the college diploma, 260 (50.4%) circled the master's degree, and 31 (6%) circled the doctorate. Students were asked how many times they had met with their current faculty advisor

Table 2
Responses to Ten Questions Presented on All Survey Forms (N = 519)

Item on Survey	Response Key (%) 1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 ??	4 Disagree	5 Strongly Disagree	Mean	SD	N
I would recommend my advisor to a friend in my situation.	28%	32%	18%	9%	13%	2.5	1.4	482
I would like to continue with my present advisor.	36%	31%	13%	9%	11%	2.3	1.3	472
My advisor is effective and helpful.	28%	36%	17%	12%	7%	2.4	1.2	478
My College's central advisement office is effective and helpful.	20%	45%	28%	6%	2%	2.2	0.9	455
All students should be REQUIRED to meet with their advisor at least once EACH QUARTER.	37%	18%	23%	14%	8%	2.4	1.3	515
All advisement should be centralized in a college office.	27%	26%	25%	15%	8%	2.5	1.2	408
My coursework is valuable and worthwhile.	29%	42%	24%	3%	1%	2.1	0.9	519
My non-academic life at BGSU is exciting and enjoyable.	34%	38%	22%	4%	3%	2.0	1.0	512
I am committed to my major and don't plan to change.	67%	21%	6%	3%	2%	1.5	.9	514
I will probably drop out of college.	1.0%	.2%	2.3%	7.8%	88.5%	4.8	0.6	511

since the previous September (24.4% marked "0" times, 23% once, 18% twice, 14% three times, 7% four times, 5.6% five times, 4.1% for six times, .8% seven times, .8 % eight times, and 4.1% for nine or more times for mean meeting frequency of 2.2). Students were also asked "about how many times have you ever met with a faculty advisor" (9% never, 15% once, 12% twice, 17% three times, 10% four times, 8% five times, 5% six times, 3% seven times, 2% eight times, and 19% nine or more times for a mean frequency of 4.1 times and a median of 3.3 times). Somewhat surprisingly, juniors and seniors had not met with advisors more frequently than sophomores or freshmen.

General Satisfaction. The reported meeting frequencies, the sum score derived from the three questions reflecting satisfaction with their advisor, and the responses to the questions reflecting satisfaction with the central PATCO office, with coursework, and with nonacademic life could all be considered to be potential correlates of one another. Table 3 presents the Pearson Product-moment coefficients produced when these variables were correlated.

Apparently, students that met their advisors with some frequency last year also met with similar frequencies in previous years, and a positive rating of the advisor was positively correlated with frequency of contact with the advisor. Students that rated their advisor positively also tended to rate their courses (r = .20) and the PATCO office (r = .14) positively, although the relationships were not strong. Satisfaction with courses and satisfaction with nonacademic life tended to be positively but weakly correlated (r = .17, p < .002). In fact, satisfaction with nonacademic life appeared to be correlated (and then, weakly) with only two responses to the short-form questions,

Table 3

Correlations, Means and Standard Deviations Reflecting Seven Variables

MEAN	SD	VARIABLES	Correlation Coefficients 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.2	2.2	1. Times met with advisor this year	---	.68***	.46***	.01	.10	.04	-.08
4.1	3.0	2. Total times ever met advisor	502	---	.35***	.03	.11*	.01	-.08
10.6	3.9	3. Advisor Rating[a]	489	477	---	.14*	.20***	.03	.10
2.2	.9	4. Rating of Central Office	454	442	442	---	.13*	.12	.14*
2.1	.9	5. Satisfaction with courses	516	505	490	455	---	.17**	.23**
2.0	1.0	6. Satisfaction with Nonacademic life	509	499	486	449	512	---	.11*
4.8	.6	7. Probability of leaving college	509	497	483	449	511	505	---

NOTE: Pearson Product-moment correlation coefficients appear above the main diagonal while the numbers of subjects producing them appear below the main diagonal.

[a]The advisor rating is the sum of three separate questions.

*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001

satisfaction with courses (r = .17) and the likelihood of dropping from school (r = -.11, p < .05). The only strong correlations among responses to the shorter versions of the survey were responses to the three separate questions reflecing satisfaction with the advisor. These three questions all intercorrelated strongly (r = .88 to .90) and produced a three item scale with an Alpha reliability coefficient of .96.

Prediction of drop-out. Fewer than 4.5% of the students indicated that they might possibly drop out of college, and 86.6% indicated strong disagreement with the statement "I will probably drop out of college." Likelihood of dropping from college was not correlated with responses to most of the other questions and only weakly correlated with two responses related to advisement: "I would like to continue with my present advisor" (r = .12, p < .04); and "My advisor is effective and helpful" (r = .12, p < .03). Results produced by the employment of a step-wise, multiple-regression procedure indicated that the likelihood of dropping out of college was moderately related to lack of commitment to a current major (r = .37, p < .001) and somewhat related to satisfaction with coursework (r = -.23). The combined multiple R was .40 and accounted for only 16% of the variance.

The highest academic degree that respondents expected to achieve was similarly uncorrelated with responses to most questions. Only satisfaction with courses (r = .19), commitment to a major (r = .18), and likelihood of dropping from college (r = -.19) were correlated with this indicator of educational aspiration. Attitudes toward advisors, toward the advisement office and toward nonacademic activities, however, were not correlated with expected highest degree. While only

one student (.3%) indicated that the high school diploma would be the most likely highest academic degree, 213 (42%) expected to obtain a college diploma as their highest degree, 260 (50%) expected to complete the master's degree, and only 31 (6%) aspired to the doctorate.

Additional Results from the Long Questionnaire

The longer form permitted the addition of questions concerning topics not completely covered on the shorter form of the questionnaire. Table 4 presents the responses to several of these questions.

Approximately 97% of those responding believed that classroom instruction should be evaluated regularly while 93% also favored the regular evaluation of advisors. Over 60% strongly agreed that these two faculty evaluations should be included in personnel files and considered in promotion decisions; agreement dropped from 97% to 69% for classroom instruction and from 93% to 63% for advisement. However, only 2% of these students disagreed with regular evaluation of advisement, none disagreed with regular evaluation of instruction, 11% disagreed with employing student evaluation of advisement for promotion decisions, and only 6% disagreed with similar employment of student evaluation of instruction.

A required yearly meeting with advisors was agreed with by 72% (19% disagreed) while a required quarterly meeting was agreed with by 43%, disagreed with by 34% and faced with mixed agreement/disagreement by 24%.

The Central Program Advisement Office. The suggestions relating to the replacement of faculty advisors with a centralized advisement office elicited a general disagreement (65%) with only 12 agreeing, 22% of mixed agreement and nineteen people unable to answer the question.

Table 4
Responses to Seven Questions Presented on the Longer Survey

	ITEM	RESPONSE KEY (%) 1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 ---	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	MEAN	SD	N
38.	Faculty advisors should be evaluated regularly.	0%	2%	5%	32%	61%	4.5	.7	98
39.	Classroom instruction should be evaluated regularly.	0%	0%	3%	35%	62%	4.6	.6	97
40.	Student evaluation of advisors should be put in personnel and promotion files.	3%	8%	25%	26%	37%	3.9	1.1	99
41.	Student evaluation of instructor should be included in personnel and promotion files.	2%	4%	24%	31%	38%	3.8	4.0	99
43.	College of Education should eliminate faculty advisors and expand central advisement office.	37%	28%	22%	5%	7%	2.2	1.2	81
44.	Students should be required to meet with advisor once each year.	6%	13%	9%	26%	46%	3.9	1.3	98
45.	Students should be required to meet with advisor each quarter.	10%	24%	24%	13%	30%	3.3	1.4	98

Since 34% of these students also indicated that they couldn't answer if the "central College Office of Program Advisement is effective and helpful," and 5% claimed to have never met with a faculty advisor for more than 10 minutes, many of these students may not have had enough information to form a judgement concerning centralized vs. decentralized advisement.

The longer form also asked students what is the most important function of the College's Central Program Advisement Office? Although 56% of the respondents indicated that course-choice and schedule planning was the most important function of advisors, the most important function of the central PAO was perceived to be assisting with career choice (41%). Assisting with courses/schedule choices were chosen by only 21% with 18% choosing assistance with major-minor decisions and 17% most interested in resolving various problems with faculty, the administration or with BGSU regulations. Although nearly half of the respondents to the longer survey form (43%) reported never having seen someone other than their advisor at the central PAO, 18% reported seeing someone other than their advisor at the PAO once, 15% twice, 8% three times, 10% four times and 6% more than four times. Thirty-four percent of the respondents to the long form did not respond to the question asking if the PAO were effective and helpful (11% failed to respond to a similar question about their faculty advisor), but of those responding, 81.8% agreed or strongly agreed that the PAO was effective and helpful (against 66.3% for the faculty advisor), and only 2% disagreed (none strongly) with this description of the PAO (15% neither agreed nor disagreed). Over 22% of the respondents, however, disagreed (14.6%) or strongly disagreed (7.9%) with the description of

their faculty advisor as helpful and effective (11.2% neither agreed nor disagreed).

Advisor Helpfulness

The long form also permitted the inclusion of a set of questions concerning the helpfulness of advisors in resolving different kinds of problems. Table 5 presents the response patterns elicited by these nine questions. Table 5 also presents the Pearson Product-moment coefficient (r) obtained when the response to each question was correlated with a general evaluation of the advisor's helpfulness.

In general, advisors were perceived at least helpful (by those who responded) in assisting students with personal concerns and worries (38.5% of those responding to this question labeled their advisor as not helpful while only 27% labeled them as helpful) and in helping students to understand themselves and their goals (36.4% responding marked not helpful vs. 35% marking helpful). Advisors were most helpful in assisting with course schedules (16.3% not helpful vs. 71% helpful) and with referring students to persons or offices that might help (16.7% not helpful vs. 73% helpful), while being of some help in exploring career possibilities (24% not helpful vs. 51% helpful) and being someone students can depend on (29% not helpful vs. 52.4% helpful). Advisors as persons helping students to enjoy their experiences at BGSU (28.6% not helpful vs. 41.4% helpful), as cutters of red tape (34% not helpful vs. 45% helpful) or as guides to majors or minors (30.4% not helpful vs. 51% helpful) were perceived as of mixed usefulness. Dependability most correlated with general satisfaction with the advisor.

Table 5

Responses to "How helpful has your advisor been concerning..."

	RESPONSE KEY (%)									
	Definitely Not Helpful 1	Generally Not Helpful 2	?? 3	Generally Helpful 4	Very Helpful 5	Not Answerable	r^a	$\bar{X}$	SD	N
11. Referring me to offices/ persons that can help...	10	3	8	35	22	22	.70	3.7	1.3	78
12. Deciding upon a course schedule.	6	8	11	26	35	14	.78	3.9	1.2	86
13. Exploring majors and minors...	10	11	13	22	13	31	.75	3.2	1.3	69
14. Exploring career possibilities.	12	6	19	28	10	25	.71	3.2	1.3	75
15. Helping me to understand myself and my goals.	17	7	19	13	10	34	.77	2.9	1.4	66
16. Being someone I can depend upon.	17	6	15	19	23	20	.88	3.3	1.5	80
17. Cutting through red tape.	12	7	12	12	13	44	.80	3.1	1.5	56
18. Helping me to enjoy my experience at BGSU.	14	6	21	14	15	30	.73	3.1	1.4	70
19. Helping me with personal concerns and worries.	14	6	18	6	8	48	.82	2.8	1.4	52

NOTE: [a]The correlation coefficient between general satisfaction with advisement and each item's responses reflects only the opinions of students who responded to that question.

Advisor Behaviors.

Thirteen questions also unique to the longer questionnaire asked students to determine how true of their advisor were specific advisor behaviors. Eighty-one of the 100 respondents answered each of these questions and their responses were factor analyzed. Three factors accounted for 66% of the total variance. Factor I loaded most heavily upon "keeps well informed about my progress at BGSU" and also loaded on questions referring to the advisor's willingness to listen to the advisee, ask the advisees about their college experiences and be knowledgeable concerning vocational/career opportunities as well as concerning BGSU regulations and personnel. This "listen and know" factor accounted for 47% of the total variance. Factor II (11% of the total variance) was most related to a rushed and unknowledgeable quality of the advisor and loaded most heavily upon "seemed in a hurry to end our meeting," "was hard to get in touch with," "does not encourage me to talk about my experiences," and "seemed uncertain or unclear about program or graduation requirements." Factor III (8.4% of the variance) reflected the advisor's knowledge concerning the requirements of the advisee's programs.

General satisfaction correlated most heavily with the Factor I and Factor III items of willingness and ability to listen ($r = .79$), knowledge of BGSU rules and regulations ($r = .75$), knowledge of vocational and career opportunities ($r = .73$), and knowledge of program requirements (.68) and student progress (.65). The Factor II items, "seemed in a hurry to end our meeting" ($r = -.65$), "seemed unclear or uncertain about program or graduation requirements" ($r = -.55$) and "was hard to get in touch with" ($r = -.41$) were negatively correlated

with general satisfaction with advisement. General satisfaction with advisement was also moderately and positively correlated with frequency of contact with an advisor since the beginning of the year (r = .55) and with the frequency of contact (for 10 minutes or more) (r = .47). General satisfaction with a faculty advisor was significantly but negatively correlated with frequency of contact with the PAO with someone other than an advisor (r = -.29, p < .005).

Educational Aspiration. Likelihood of not dropping from college and likelihood of graduating on schedule were combined and correlated with the other responses. The strongest correlates, although significantly different from 0 (p < .01), were not strong and reflected general satisfaction with the academic program (r = .32), and with courses in general (r = .27). Commitment to current major (r = .27) and some characteristics of the advisor such as knowledge of BGSU regulations (r = .34), knowledge of vocational and career opportunities (r = .28), knowledge of the student's progress (r = .27), knowledge of post-graduate opportunities (r = .29), knowledge concerning helpful offices and persons (r = .28), helpfulness concerning course scheduling (r = .26), willingness to ask questions about college experiences (r = .25), and willingness or ability to listen (r = .20) and be depended upon (r = .21) also correlated slightly but significantly with academic aspiration. Responses to questions dealing with non-academic life were not correlated with perceived likelihood of completion.

Responses to the Different Forms of the Survey

Table 6 presents the response rate for the four types of survey forms. Contrary to expectations, the response rate was slightly greater (100 returns from 400 forms, 25%) for the longer, two-page,

typed form than for any of the shorter, one-page forms. Also contrary to expectations, the two printed (and, therefore, more expensive) shorter forms, even the one printed on school colors, were no more effective in eliciting response than was the simpler and less expensively produced typed and xeroxed form.

Table 6

Response Rates for Four Different Versions of the Survey Questionnaire

Questionnaire	Response Rate N	%
1. Typed, 2 pages, xeroxed, 56 items	100	25%
2. Printed, 1 page, orange paper, 17 items	80	20%
3. Printed, 1 page, white paper, 17 items	76	19%
4. Typed, 1 page, xeroxed, 17 items	85	21.3%
TOTAL	341	21.3%

CONCLUSIONS

The majority of the college students that responded to this survey appear to view faculty advisors primarily as persons able to help students with choosing courses and organizing class schedules. Secondary functions were related to assistance with decisions related to college majors and minors and career decision-making. Assistance with avoiding or cutting institutional red tape was perceived by some to be an advisor function, but assistance with study skills and, especially, assistance with personal problems were perceived to be much less important for almost all of the students. Students of different college class levels did not differ as to their perceptions of the importance of advisor functions.

Perceptions of the functions of the centralized Program Advisement Office were similar in that assistance with personal problems and study skill development were not reported to be major roles. However, assistance with career decision-making was perceived to be a major focus of the central office by over 40% with the remaining students nearly equally distributed across the three functions related to assistance with red tape, major-minor decisions, and course-schedule problems. Evidently, the faculty advisor and the central advisement office perform similar functions for some students but somewhat different functions for others (with the faculty advisor more focused upon courses and schedules and the central office serving to provide additional support related to career or major/minor decisions and surmounting institutional red tape).

The effective advisor appeared to be a person who combined three major characteristics: (1) knowledge concerning program requirements, courses and schedules, university rules and regulations, and the advisee's progress or status; (2) dependability and availability; and (3) willingness and ability to listen.

While a considerable majority of students (63%) agreed that their advisor was effective and helpful, 24% indicated that their advisor was undependable, nearly 20% reported that their advisor was not effective and helpful and that they did not wish to continue with their advisor. In comparison, only 7% did not find the central advisement office to be effective and helpful, only 5% found their courses to be neither valuable nor worthwhile, and only 7% found their nonacademic life at college to be less than exciting and enjoyable. Twenty-three percent would not recommend their advisor to a friend in

their situation. Quite evidently, there exists a group of students who, although generally satisfied with other aspects of their college life, are dissatisfied with their faculty advisor. Since this dissatisfaction was reported by a self-selected group from only one college (those education students who returned their questionnaires), this dissatisfaction may or may not be characteristic of a similarly large proportion of all students.

Few students who responded to the questionnaire indicated that they were likely to drop out of college, and the correlations between such indicators of academic aspiration and other questions were generally low or nonexistent. Satisfaction with coursework and some indicators of satisfaction with advisement did, however, correlate to some degree with indicators of academic aspiration. Whether or not better teaching or better advisement can influence retention and educational aspiration remains open to question. There remains much less question as to student agreement with attempts to evaluate classroom instruction and/or advisement. A considerable majority were in favor of the regular evaluation of these two faculty functions.

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